

## **National COSEE Council**

National COSEE Network (NCN, a.k.a. “Network”) business is conducted by the National COSEE Office (NCO) and National COSEE Council (NCC, a.k.a. “Council”) working in close collaboration. The Council was formed in the early stages of the Network by the first group of COSEE principal investigators to act as a deliberative assembly that carries the Network vision and moves Network goals forward. Each COSEE Center and the NCO has a voting representative and an alternate member on the Council. An Executive Committee comprised of the chair, past-chair, and chair-elect leads the Council. The Executive Director of the Network is an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee.

The initiation of the Council was an internal COSEE decision and it has been instrumental in the growth of the Network. Council working groups, chaired by voting Council members and comprised of Network members, have been formed to focus on specific aspects of Network business. The collegial nature of Council operations and the willingness of individual COSEE PIs to serve on this governing body and its working groups has moved COSEE beyond a group of individually funded programs toward a healthy and robust national network that is linking and leveraging ocean sciences broader impact activities across the country.

The Council is intimately involved in the implementation of the Centers’ work and informed by the collective work of the Centers to ensure that the Network learns, benefits from, and disseminates effective practices that are representative of the sum of all efforts. The NCO has led strategic planning efforts, and with the Council, it has developed a Strategic Business Plan for the Network that is used to generate an annual Network Operating Plan (AOP). Progress on the AOP is formally reviewed by the Council throughout the year.

As the Network has evolved, operating documents have been established to guide the Council’s efforts and overall Network structure. In 2010, Operating Policies and Terms of Reference (See Appendices) for Council operations were developed by the Governance Working Group. This governing document describes membership conditions; meeting and voting procedures; executive committee elections and responsibilities; and working group establishment, organization, and functions.

### **Council and Network Meetings**

The Council meets on a monthly basis to keep abreast of Centers’ progress and work, make decisions for the Network, plan Network activities, strategize on important directions and/or changes for the Network, and review and reflect on the impact of the Network’s work. Additional tactical meetings (to respond in a timely manner to issues that need to be addressed more rapidly) are organized and facilitated by the Council chair.

There are two mandatory meetings of the Council as required by its by-laws:

At the fall Council Meeting, time is scheduled to discuss the annual operating plan for the following year. Other business includes strategic actions by the NCO, the Network, and the Council.

The NCO develops an annual operating plan for the Network in consultation with the Executive Committee. Once agreed upon by the Council, the plan is widely distributed to the entire Network.

Each May the spring Network meeting brings all Network members together to focus on the Network's theme for the year (e.g., diversity, scientist engagement, professional development, etc.). Professional development is provided to Network members on these themes by experts both internal and external to the Network. Other Network business is conducted at these meetings to engage the broader membership in Council business. The Council meets separately and with the National Advisory Committee during the spring Network meeting. The Council business sessions include discussions on the progress of the annual operating plan, the outcome of the annual Council Chair election, setting the Network theme for following years, and other business as necessary.

The Council has adopted a rotating meeting schedule where funded Centers volunteer to take turns hosting the annual spring Network meetings. Responsibilities of the host Center include assisting the NCO with logistical planning, including hotel and catering arrangements, and providing a site tour or appropriate program of interest to help Network members better understand and appreciate the host Center's work and mission.

To support the Council between the spring Network and fall Council meetings, the Council and NCO have established seven additional categories of meetings to conduct Network business:

- Impact review meetings (for review and reflection of the business of the Network, to look at long-term trends of where the Network is heading, and to look at patterns and impacts of what the Network is doing) facilitated by the NCO, Council chair, and/or a Working Group chair;
- "Best practices" work sessions (to determine Network proven effective practices related to specific topics) facilitated by the NCO;
- Evaluators' workshops (an annual workshop for Center and Network evaluators) facilitated by the NCO;
- Check-in meetings (monthly conference call or virtual meeting) facilitated by the Council chair;
- Planning meetings (for overall yearly operational planning of activities, events, conferences, etc.) facilitated by the NCO and Council chair;
- Tactical meetings (to respond in a timely manner to issues that need to be addressed more rapidly; these meetings will vary in size and focus) facilitated by the Council chair;
- Strategic meetings (Network-type meetings encouraging input from the Network members and National Advisory Council focused on long-range planning and strategic thinking) facilitated by the NCO.

### **Common Operating Agreement For All Council Working Groups And Committees**

Members of the Network or external participants that express interest in serving on a Council Working Group or *ad hoc* Committee agree to the following:

- One member must serve as chair. Duties of the chair include:
  - Set-up regular communications,
  - Distribute workload, and

- Document progress and actions in collaboration with all members.
- Members must continuously participate and contribute to the stated group/ committee goal.
- Members must inform the group/committee chair ahead of time of any expected extended absence from group/committee meetings so that responsibilities may be reallocated among remaining members of the group/committee in a timely manner.
- Lack of communication with the group/committee or non-contribution to group/ committee work for a period extending beyond three regular working sessions will automatically end tenure on that group/committee (e.g., removal from the working group's email listserv).
- Each group/committee should capture, review, and disseminate minutes of each meeting.
- Each group/committee member is expected to review meeting minutes to avoid delaying project progress.
- Minutes are sent to all group/committee members before next session by chair or such member in charge of minutes.
- Once approved by the chair, minutes are to be posted on the COSEE online File Manager.
- The size of a working group/ad hoc committee will be flexible but reasonable in numbers, as too many participants can hamper progress. As the group/committee evolves, it will regularly reassess if and what additional expertise is needed, and whose contribution might only be needed temporally.

